

REMARKS

This is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed March 17, 2008. Claims 1-20 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance are requested for at least the following reasons.

In the Action, claims 1, 4, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henke (U.S. Patent No. 4,885,876) in view of Annis et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,991,529). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present application is a National Stage filing based on PCT Application No. PCT/US03/37833 filed on November 25, 2003. PCT Application No. PCT/US03/37833 is, in turn, a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/212,916 filed on August 5, 2002. The claims of the present application are fully supported by the disclosure of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/212,916 and are therefore entitled to the priority date thereof.

Annis has an effective section 102(e) prior art date of November 18, 2004 (the filing date of Annis). The priority date of the present application, August 5, 2002, pre-dates the effective prior art date of Annis. As such, Annis does not qualify as prior art with respect to the present application. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 4, and 12 are therefore requested.

Claims 2, 3, 5-11, and 13-20 are noted as being allowable. The Examiner's assistance in identifying allowable subject matter is appreciated. All claims are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested. Please contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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